

You Can

Part 3: You Can Authentically Connect

Do I prioritize loving others just as Jesus loves me?

John 13:33-35

WE: Religion of Xianity presented as what should/shouldn't do...

- Go to church, read bible, pray, vote a certain way, don't drink, smoke, dress...
- **Measure our success** by what rules follow/break... And how our score compares to others'

Religion often values the right beliefs over valuing the people right in front of us.

Forces us to focus on ourselves and creates either self-righteous/judgmental religious rule-followers(no one actually admits they are) or exhausted guilt-ridden religious victims

Result? Hypocrisy...

Start pretending to be something we're not so that we can fit in. We don't show the real us for fear that people will see our flaws and won't accept us...

We don't even let ourselves see our real selves for fear that we'll just feel more guilt b/c we don't measure up to our/others standards.

Religion forces us to hide our true selves in order to find acceptance.

- If you grew up in this kind of religion you know exactly what I'm talking about.
- Why you might have left.
- Why it feels like if there is a God he's not too cool with you.
- You might have actually seen other people struggle with this, too: self-destruct under religious pressure, or act one way on a certain day with certain people, and differently the rest of the time

So instead of being an answer to the pain/hopelessness around us, Xianity actually multiplies a huge problem we are seeing in our world, society, families, selves.

People are lonely, separated, disjointed, siloed, tribal, etc.

So Sad b/c not what Jesus intended... The Jesus Way is not about what you should/shouldn't do... It's about WHO you CAN/will be. What you CAN do.

AND... **Jesus made a way for us to authentically connect with others while being our authentic selves.**

GOD: If anyone knew this it was John, Jesus' best friend for at least 3 years.

Wrote about his experience of being fully known and fully loved by God in a body.

Records last night all together before Jesus arrested and killed. Kind of Jesus' last teaching before everything changed.

John 13:33

If you knew what was about to happen... you'd want to make sure they got the most important thing.

So what is it..

John 13:34a

Don't rush by this... NEW COMMAND... replacing the OLD commands.

Wasn't adding to the Old Testament Law... "I am replacing the 613 rules of the Old Covenant/Testament with one overarching command..."

"My way will not be about measuring up to a list of do's and don'ts"

"Your spiritual success will not be measured by how well you follow the rules... your commitment to me will be measured by how well you love others."

Following Jesus requires following one command... love.

BUT- What does love mean? Rather vague, right? Why people like me, or maybe even you, get blamed for "watering down" or "just trying to make people feel good", or not "doing church the right way" ...

Understandable... "Love" can mean so many different things to so many different people...

But the truth is... Jesus didn't leave room for us to make up our own definition of love...

John 13:34b

How did Jesus love them?

Didn't follow a list of rules.

"I loved you by keeping the 10 commandments..."

James/John- I didn't murder you. Peter- I didn't sleep with your wife, Thaddeus- I didn't lie about you,

Matthew- I didn't steal your stuff or even jealousy want it."

Wow Jesus really inspiring stuff... thanks for that sacrificial love.

Jesus loved others by submitting his life for the good of others.

Gave up his preferences, rights, privileges, comfort, time for those around him.

Chose to accept and love the 12 before they did anything to earn it

- Matthew- hated, rejected. Jesus accepted and invited- "Matthew remember that? Do the same"
- Peter- Impatient, slow to understand, a lot of mistakes. Jesus patient, forgiving. "Remember Peter? Do the same"
- Nathaniel- First met made fun of his hometown/family. Jesus still accepted and invited. Didn't choose to be offended. "Nathaniel choose love over offense."

- Could've gone to all 12. "Judas, you know how you are about to completely betray me, but I still washed your feet and included you in the very 1st communion? I just want you to do the same."

And in a few hours Jesus would show the ultimate example of love while these guys either ran and hid or looked on in horror.

Proving true love is a commitment to and a sacrifice for the other person.

See we don't love others by following a list of do's and don'ts, by following a ritual, singing some songs, saying certain prayers... **we love others by using our life to make the lives of others better.**

For a JF... this type of living/love isn't some idealistic goal that maybe someday we'll reach, or that is a mark of the religious/professional elite...

It's not just an add on, not just a good idea... and it's not something we just get to define for ourselves...

This is THE MAIN THING about following Jesus...

John 13:35

Loving like Jesus is both the point and the proof of following Jesus.

This love has no pretenses, it isn't trying to prove anything.

It is simply choosing to use your life for what is best for others.

It makes you vulnerable, more likely to be hurt, makes you more likely to be taken advantage of/walked on...

But that's why Jesus based it on himself... not a list of rules or rituals.

When we are confidently trusting Jesus... we are trusting him not only for our eternal future, but our daily minute to minute lives now.

So we don't have to worry about being taken advantage of... we can be free to give without worrying about getting anything in return b/c the king of the universe is watching out for us.

You don't have to worry about being vulnerable. You can be free to be your true/authentic self b/c the God who died for you knows everything about you and still chooses and accepts you.

This is where last episode intersects with this one- remember how we talked about trusting God freeing us from fear and worry and trying to control stuff we can't control anyway? Well...

Confidently trusting Jesus frees us to authentically connect with others.

YOU: Question... do you trust that Jesus loves you?

- Fact is he loved you/accepted you by dying for you before you were born.

- Knew who you would be, what you would do... died for you and invited you knowing everything about you.
- Just have to choose to accept invitation and trust

1st trust Jesus and then, b/c of that trust... love like Jesus loved you. **Gal 5:6b.**

Remember... Confidently trusting Jesus frees us to authentically connect w/ others

You are free to be your authentic self and invite others into being their authentic selves.

You become a cure to break the cycle that is creating an epidemic of loneliness.

When you love like Jesus ...you prove the truth of Jesus' love.

The motivation behind a JF's life is the love of Jesus- Ephesians 4:32

Steps to grow?

Read **John 13:12-17**

Ask THE Question: What does love look like?

- If Jesus were me, in front of this person what would love/submission look like?
- What does using my life to make their life better look like in this time/situation?
- Maybe pick one relationship to focus on this week/month... it will spill into other relationships.
 - When I love my wife better I love my co-workers better.

Evaluate yourself: 0-10. Do I prioritize loving others just as Jesus loves me? (Metric)

- Resources: For different relationships

Connect: **It's difficult to authentically connect with one another if we don't know one another.**

Alliances: "I want to grow in this... want to join me?" **List of resources.**

Connect Groups: to help you live this out in a community that is practicing the same thing.

WE: We have been entrusted to be a part of building the Kingdom of God here and now.

It's foundation is the radical and simple command of Jesus... to love each other as he has loved us.

We can provide the authentic connection everyone is desperately craving/starving for...

It starts with knowing WHO you are and what You CAN be with Jesus...

You are loved and accepted.

You don't have to hide. You don't have to pretend.

Because Jesus loved you... You can love others. You can authentically connect. You can be a part of the solution.

Because we are accepted and loved by Jesus we can accept and love others


Questions


1. How is God working in your life & world this week?
2. Read John 13:12-17. What stands out to you about Jesus' "authentic connection" to His followers here?
3. Share your 0-10 evaluation of prioritizing loving others as Jesus loves you in one or more of your relationships.
4. What is your next step in "authentically connecting" with others or loving others like Jesus loves you this week? How can your group pray for you?

Summary:

Religion tells us that to be accepted we must meet an unattainable standard of do's and don'ts. This causes us to hide our true selves in order to find acceptance. Jesus came to dismantle this horrible cycle and made a way for us to authentically connect with others while being our authentic selves.

Episode Breakdown:

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▶ Upcoming #SalemOregon On-Site Gatherings

October 10 & 24th, 4:30pm at our new location! <https://www.yourcrosscreek.com/gathering/> for more info.

▶ #forSalem Opportunity: BOO YOUR NEIGHBOR

1. Buy or make treats for a neighbor.
2. Secretly leave the treats & the "We've Been Boo'd!" sign on their doorstep.

Download the PDF: <https://yourcrosscreek.com/boo>

We will have BOO Oreos for you to give to your neighbors at our October 10th gathering!

▶ Suggested Bible Readings:

John 13:12-17, Ephesians 4:31-32

▶ Music we listened to making this episode:

Blue Swede- Hooked on a Feeling: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5jkAkm4JmM>

Inhaler- Honest Face: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAP4B1G-SWk>

The Oh Hellos- Tiny Desk Concert: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwvCEWWwt7Q>

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